

Lincoln

BENADE

E 457

.8

.B45





Class E 457

Book .8

E 45



7.4 511 26
THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN;
WHAT IT REPRESENTS.

A SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

426
940
First New Jerusalem Society

OF

PITTSBURGH, PENN'A.

THURSDAY, JUNE 1st, 1865,

By Rev. W. H. BENADE.

W. G. Johnston & Co., Printers and Stationers. 57 Wood and 105 Third Streets, Pittsburgh.

1865.



THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN;
WHAT IT REPRESENTS.

A S E R M O N ,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

First New Jerusalem Society

OF

PITTSBURGH, PENN'A,

THURSDAY, JUNE 1st, 1865,

By Rev. W. H. BENADIE.

JA

W. G. Johnston & Co., Printers and Stationers; 57 Wood and 105 Third Streets, Pittsburgh.

1865.

E457
3
E45

S E R M O N .

IN accordance with the recommendation of the Chief Magistrate of the country, the men of all religions in the loyal portion of the land, observe this day as a day of fasting and humiliation, and have met together in their several houses of worship, to offer prayers unto the Lord, being specially led thereunto by consideration of the closing act in the fearful drama, whose tragic scenes have convulsed the nation's life during the last four years of its existence.

Moved by hell, the men of the South had conspired together from evil and selfish ends, and had risen up in wicked rebellion against the parental government, from which was born their national life, which had nursed their infancy, which had reared them through their childhood, and which had filled unto their manhood a full measure of prosperity and honor. Moved by hell, with hatred and malice in their heart, with murder and weapons in their hands, these men of the South had sought to compass the death of their country, which, under Heaven and the Church, was the nearest neighbor to them; which ought to have been dearest to their natural affections, and the most cherished object of their hopes, aspirations and strivings.

And, when in the slowly germinating, growing and ripening conviction of the imminent and threatening danger of the nation's existence, the men of the North and the

handful of true and loyal men still remaining in the South, had come to the rescue of their Government, and had put forth ever more of the might which the Lord gives to the right; those men of the South, opening their hearts full wide to every infernal form of hatred and rage, whetting their malice upon the stones of every satanic falsehood, and baring their arms to every fearful deed of blood, cruelty and revenge, gave themselves, soul and body, to the work of death and destruction.

During four long and terrible years there had raged a war, unparalleled in the magnitude of its proportions; unequalled in the ferocity of the one, and in the calm and firm determination of the other party; unmatched in the manifestations of the cruelty of hate, and of the forbearance and long suffering of devotion to principles of Truth and Right; and, as unsurpassed in the grandeur of its results, as in the enormity of the crime which gave it birth, and in the vastness of the power put forth in the interests of humanity to crush the worst of despotisms, a despotism which decreed the destruction of the souls of men, that it might enslave their bodies.

And, at length, when the dead on the battle-field, and in the camp; on the march, and in the hospital; on river and ocean; from secret blow and bullet; from cruel privation, and deliberate starvation, had been numbered by hundreds of thousands; when desolation, utter and widespread, had covered the fairest portions of the land; when malignant and open treason in the South, combined with hidden and viler treachery in the North, had failed of its purpose, by fire and sword, by poison and pestilence; when the burning and raging lust of the rebellion's heart had utterly exhausted the powers of its body, in desperate hatred it called together all the forces of malice, revenge, cruelty and cunning, and entering with them into the dark

and secret council-chambers of hell, there bound them all into one fell purpose to strike its last blow at the right. To strike the last and fatal blow by the hand of the leading traitor? No! By the hand of the rebel soldier? No! By the hand of an open and avowed foe? No!--By the hand of one, whose miserable life had been sheltered by the Government he sought to destroy; by the hand of one who, having failed to mimic well the tragic words and deeds of other men, sought an infamous immortality, and a filthy reward in a deed of actual tragedy, in the name of a cause, to which he was no more bound, by any selfish or worldly interests, than was the bullet which he sped into the brain of the best friend of those who upheld that cause. And, thus, did the rebellion prove itself, by its own last act, to have been all a Murder, clothed in the dark and filthy rags of a Lie, the very child and image of him who was "a murderer and a liar from the beginning."

Because of the act of assassination, have the loyal men of the nation met together on this day, in their several houses of worship, at the invitation of the President of the United States, to observe a day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer. And it is right. It is right that they should go up to the Lord, and fasting before Him, should offer unto Him their prayers and supplications,—so that they may come into states of mind and heart to be led by Him into the way in which they shall walk, according to His divine Will and Law. It is right, too, that men should fast and pray according to the light which they have received in respect to the things of true spiritual life, in order that these things may flow in, and form into correspondence and agreement with themselves whatever is of civil and moral life with them.

In the faith which we profess, men and brethren, and ,

according to which we worship the Lord, the act of fasting is not an act of the body, but of the spirit. The outward abstinence from accustomed food signifies to us a corresponding state of the mind and life, a state of grief, mourning and humiliation on account of a deficiency of the Truth and the Goodness, which are the spirit's food. And prayer, in our faith, is a turning of the whole interior man, of all his affections and thoughts to the Lord, opening them to His divine influences, from an inmost desire to receive them, to the end that they may lead into truer conditions of thought, into better states of affection, and into purer and holier ways of speaking and acting; that they may bring about a spiritual consociation of man with the angels, and a conjunction of his life with the divine life.

In the light of this faith, it belongs to our fasting that we seek to derive from the Lord's teachings to His Church, in His Word and Doctrine, a clearer and fuller understanding of the occasion of this our mourning and humiliation; of the great truths involved in its permission, and of the meaning which it has to us and to all men; an understanding which shall lead to a real and living acknowledgment of the Lord's divine government in the World, and over the World; to a real and living acknowledgment of Him as the all in all of life, the Creator, Preserver, Redeemer and Savior, whose only end in all the operations of His providence with His human creatures, is the salvation of their souls, and their being made blessed and happy from Himself to eternity.

If we can thus gather, from the fearful event, which is the occasion of our fasting and prayer, the lessons of instruction concerning what is true and good, which it contains, if it is made the means of enabling us to see what great evils we ought to shun as sins against God, and

what the good is which we ought to do, and how we ought to do it,—then shall our mourning become to us a thing of real and actual life, not a mere emotion of grief and sorrow, but an intelligent appreciation of the cause of our grief and sorrow, leading to an actual reception of that truth which shall guide us in light, and to an actual doing of that truth, by which the light shall become unto us the way of life,

And, in order that we may so regard this occasion, and suffer it, first of all, to place our minds in a true position towards itself and towards Him, who alone is Light and Life, let us plant ourselves firmly on that great truth, which, by universal acknowledgment, and by actual and tangible manifestation and revelation, has been given to the nation and to the world in the life and in the death of Abraham Lincoln, the late and lamented President of the United States; the great Truth, “That there is a divine Providence of the Lord, by which He rules and governs, by provision and permission, in all the affairs of men—in the least as in the greatest, and, by which, he brings them to work together for eternal good to the souls of men whom he has created to live forever with him in the heavens.”

I will not stop, at this time, to offer either argument, or demonstration or illustration in support of this proposition. For him who has lived through, and looked upon the events of the last four years of our country's history, there can be no possible need of them. For him who denies the very evidence of his senses, to which it has been brought so manifestly home, they would be worse than useless. He would deny the fact of a blow that felled him to the earth, and the reality of the hand that raised him to his feet again. What we do need to observe, however, in respect to this great truth of a divine

Providence, in and over all the affairs of men, is that we must carefully distinguish two things therein: two things, determined, on the one hand, by the nature of Him who provides, and, on the other hand, by the nature of those who are provided for. The Lord, who provides, is good. He is all good, and only good; and He is also wise, all wise, and only wise. Whatever, therefore, in the operations of Providence, is from Him,—that is only good and wise; that is the best and wisest, being for the promotion of eternal good by means which are truest, and most perfectly adapted to the attainment of that end. Man, who is provided for, is, by nature, altogether in evils and falsities; but, at the same time, so constituted by creation, and so preserved by the Lord, that he is in freedom to act according to his own reason and understanding, in freedom to be good or evil, to be wise or foolish.

This essential constitution of the divine nature of the Lord, and of the human nature of man, necessitates two conditions of the Providence ruling and governing in the affairs of men. In the one there is *provision for good*, according to the highest wisdom, and, in the other, there is *permission of evil*, according to the state of the human understanding, determined by the will of man and its loves. Human freedom absolutely requires the power of determining human life, either towards good or evil; the power of choosing between truth and falsity. But, since man is finite, and eternal, only in the sense of immortal, that is, only in respect to the continuance of his spiritual existence, the Providence of permission must be regarded as subordinated to that of *provision*, seeing that the latter is of infinite good, and looks to what is eternal and infinite, whilst the former relates to what is only temporal and finite, or at most, to what is immortal. In permitting evil and falsehood, the Lord has respect to the eter-

nal good of all men, as well as to the highest good and the least evil of the individual man. Thus, there enters into the Lord's Providence of Good from His own divine nature this essential element, that, whilst He governs and rules men both by provision and permission, He *overrules* all things of permission, which are evil and false, for the final and eternal well-being and happiness of the universal human race. By His wisdom He so orders and arranges all the concerns of men, both spiritual and natural, that even the evil and false things which He permits, by acting as restraints upon other evil and false things, and, by correcting their results, serve gradually to restrict and diminish their power and influence, to remove them from their internal and ruling place in the hearts and lives of men, towards the circumference, and, thus, to make way for the entrance and in-dwelling of the principles of truth and goodness, by which man is reformed and regenerated into the divine image and after the divine likeness; by which he is enabled to come into the order of heaven, and to live the life of heaven even on the earth.

If we will accept this teaching of the Church, concerning a ruling and *overruling* providence; a providence which provides whatever is good and true, and only permits whatever is evil and false for the sake of human freedom according to reason, and for the sake of the development of a humanity in the image and after the likeness of the Divine Humanity, by means of a rational acknowledgment and doing of the divine Will and Law, it will not be difficult for us to obtain a somewhat clear view and understanding of the occasion, which has brought us together to-day, and of its significance to us and to all men.

The occasion is the assassination of ABRAHAM LINCOLN, late President of the United States.

In considering this sad and terrible event, I propose to notice, particularly, three things, the lessons which they teach, and the results which they ought to bring forth.

These three things are: 1st, The men;—2d, The time and place:—3d, The act itself.

And of these three things, I observe that, whilst each of them presents itself in a dual form, representing what is good and evil, all of them, as outward things, belonging to this world, represent in themselves, and in their manifestations, three internal and spiritual conditions of good and evil, of truth and falsity.

I. The men;—the victim and the murderer: the Chief Magistrate of the land and the actor; the loyal President, and the traitor assassin.

No man stands alone in the world. Every one is a man because he belongs to the human family. Every one has a neighbor and is himself a neighbor, having a certain relation to the men of his nation, tribe, family and kindred. Every man has his own place in his own nation, and among his own people. Every man belongs to a certain class and order of men, as to his affections and thoughts; to a certain rank or degree of society, as to his position, occupation, habits and actions. When any man acts, his act represents, outwardly and visibly, not only what there is in him to produce it, but also what there is in others, who are of the same kind, of the same class, or of the same degree of life.

Again, every man, by his affections and thoughts, is, internally and spiritually, associated with men in the spiritual world, who are in similar affections and thoughts, and when he acts, his act both manifests and represents the quality and kind of affection and thought in which he and his associates are; it is an outward expression of what is, and moves in their hearts and lives.

And, again, every man's use, which is his office, business or occupation, has an existence in the natural world, by virtue of its correspondence to some spiritual form of use, business or occupation, which it necessarily represents, and of which it is the express image and ultimate agent.

No man, therefore, stands alone, either in his bodily or in his spiritual life and existence. And no man acts alone, but from and with all those who are of his own kind and class, in the spiritual and in the natural world, who are associated with him by community of affection and thought, either in heaven, or in hell. On the ground of this principle, I remark that, whilst Abraham Lincoln, as a man, belonged to a certain class of men in the natural and in the spiritual world, and as a politician, to a certain class of political men, holding certain political ideas and views, which flowed from higher spiritual ideas of law and order ; and that, whilst his assassin, belonged no less to another class and order of men, nationally, politically and socially, as well as spiritually, morally and civilly ; both the former and the latter were *representative men* in another sense, by virtue of the *office* filled by the one, and of the *occupation* followed by the other.

And, here, do these two men stand apart, at a distance almost immeasurable. Wide as was the separation between them, after leaving the common ground of humanity and nationality, in all that constitutes character and quality and class, as representative men, they are antipodal.

Abraham Lincoln held the office of President of the United States. In this office he represented to the people of the country the Lord himself, as to Divine Truth, ruling and governing by Law.

John Wilkes Booth was, by occupation, an actor, and as such, not a true but a false representative of other men, or rather, of their supposed feelings, emotions, ideas and

thoughts, as these were conceived in thought, and embodied in language by still other men.

Note the distinction particularly. It is of importance to the view of the subject, which I desire to present to you.

But the office of President of the United States, and under the constitution of our government, is altogether equivalent to the office of King or Monarch, in those countries in which the kingly form of government prevails. And, concerning the nature of this office, we are thus instructed in Arcana Cœlestia, No. 3670 :

“That it is a thing of indifference what be the quality of the man who represents, whether he be evil or good, and that evil men may alike represent, and did represent, the Lord’s divine principles, *may appear from the representatives which exist even at this day; for all Kings, whatsoever they are, and of whatsoever quality, by virtue of the principle of royalty appertaining to them, represent the Lord;—the principle of royalty is holy, whatever be the nature and quality of the person who ministers therein.*”

According to this teaching of the Church, drawn from the Word, and confirmed by its literal sense throughout, did Abraham Lincoln, as President and Ruler of this country, represent the Lord in that office, which is holy, by virtue of the principle of royalty appertaining to it: by virtue of the Divine Truth, by which the Lord rules and governs all things in the Universe, and of which the regal office is the external civil agency and instrumental means. In this office he did not represent the people, according to the commonly received, but radically false, idea existing among us; but *he represented the Lord to the people*. He represented that to the nation, in the civil plane of its existence, which the Lord himself is to all men, in the spiritual and natural planes of life. And, it is in the light of this truth, that I desire to consider the nature

of the act which deprived him of his earthly existence ; and that I pronounce it an act of rebellion against the Lord, and not against man; an attempt to destroy the divine life, and not a human life.

The quality of the man, whatever we may conceive it to have been, did not affect the representative nature of his office ; it merely affected his own position, as a true or false representative *in* that office. But, even in regard to this, his position, I know of no man who can better stand the test of truth or falsity to his office, than this man of the people. And the test is this, as laid down in our doctrines :

“In proportion as a King claims to himself any portion of the holy principle appertaining to his royalty, or attributes it to himself, he is a spiritual thief ; and also, in proportion as he does evil, that is, acts contrary to what is just and equitable, and contrary to what is good and true, in the same proportion he puts off the representation of holy royalty, and represents the opposite.” (A. C. 3676.) “He never loses the *representation* of royalty, but merely renders it holy or unholy, according to his own state in it, and according to the principles which determine his administration of its functions.”

Who charges this man with the spiritual theft of claiming, or attributing to himself any portion of the holiness appertaining to his office? If any, I will not be guilty of the folly of attempting a defence in the face of that testimony which covers every page of the history of these last four years. Why, our charge against him, in the dark hours of trial and danger, has been that he would not be a spiritual thief; that he would not undertake to *rule* events and *make* history; that he would suffer himself to be guided by events, and directed only according to the exigencies of the hour. He did not even venture to pre-

dict, he had only "high hopes for the future," because he believed in a Divine Providence, and acknowledged a Divine Ruler of men. In that last, great word, which he spoke to the nation, upon assuming anew the office, to which the people, in most righteous recognition of his faithful and worthy services, had called him a second time; in that paper, which I do not hesitate to pronounce the most remarkable State paper on record, he thus solemnly discourses :

"The Almighty has his own purposes : 'Woe unto the World because of offences, for it must needs be that offences come ; but woe unto that man by whom the offence cometh.' If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of these offences which, in the Providence of God, must needs come, but which having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discern that there is any departure from those Divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him?—Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away ; yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsmen in two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil, shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword—as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, that the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether?"

Is this the language of a spiritual thief?

Does any accuse him of having acted contrary to what is just and equitable, contrary to what is good and true?

I reply—Many things of his administration may have so appeared, even in the eyes of loyal men, seeing that in

his judgment he was fallible and shortsighted, as all men are; that under the trying and difficult circumstances of his position, with varying and opposing counsels, with new and unheard of conditions, with perplexities arising from want of constitutional provision, as well as from defect of governmental organization and experience, it could not have been otherwise than that errors should be committed, and measures adopted, which failed in their expected results, and which actual results proved ill-judged. But apart from these, how much is there for which, in our haste and impatience, we have blamed, and even denounced him, and in regard to which events have most fully justified his wisdom and prudence, and condemned our folly and short-sightedness; teaching us the lesson that the position which a man occupies, not only determines his decisions, but also enables him to decide more truly and justly than is possible for those who are not similarly situated.

As President, Abraham Lincoln stood above the people who observed him. His knowledge of conditions and circumstances was more exact and minute, his range of vision was wider and more extended than theirs, and, as representative of the Lord, his office brought him, spiritually and mentally, into a higher and wiser spiritual association, under higher and wiser influences, and gave to him greater ability and power to discern what was for the good of the whole. It was his duty to judge for the whole, and to act for all.

And again, whatever errors of judgment he may have committed, surely we dare not impute to him evils of intention, we cannot charge him with any purpose to act contrary to what is good and true, in the presence of that life, which he sacrificed to the cause of his country, and whilst the tone of true and pure benevolence which pervades his last solemn words, still vibrates in our ears,

and our hearts still burn within us from the kindling at that warm flame of love to his fellow-man, which flashes forth the firm and noble sentiments in the close of his last inaugural address; sentiments bequeathed to us and to all future ages as the grand legacy of a life devoted to the good of the human family. "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphans, to do all which we may to achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations."

If this nation will take to heart and life the spirit and the truth of these words, Abraham Lincoln will need no other monument to commemorate his life, and to consecrate his memory in all coming time.

This of him as a Ruler. As a man, Abraham Lincoln was of an humble origin, as the world accounts these things. Born in obscurity and poverty, early left to himself and his own scanty resources, he began his active life with out any advantages of position or education. He had to labor for his daily bread, amidst privations and hardships, and to gain knowledge as he might, by observation, by experience, and by such scraps of learning as he could gather here and there, in the intervals of his work. But upon this I will not dwell. The great fact amidst all these circumstances, in which he was providentially placed, the fact, chiefly of moment, and most noticeable to us at this time, is, that he labored; that he lived by labor; that he raised himself by his own labor out of his humble beginnings to ever higher and higher social positions; that he disciplined himself, by labor, for the performance of ever higher uses and duties, until he came, finally, even

to the highest place in the land, a man of work; a man whose whole life was a guarantee of his living faith in labor, as the true destiny of the human race; a man, whose life and faith constituted him a most fitting and exalted representative in the civil plane, of that divine humanity of labor, against which the hells were marshaling their hosts of slaveholders in both worlds, under the banner of a confederation which proclaimed the divine right of man to "wring his bread from the sweat of other men's faces," and which laid its foundations on the chains that creaked and clanked from the writhing of human lives, bound and prostrate before inhuman lusts. A most fitting and exalted representative, was this man, I repeat it, both in his life and in his office, of that divine humanity of labor, of that inmost spiritual principle of the life of Heaven and the Church, which it has in love to the Lord and in charity towards the neighbor. What is this love, what is this charity, but to do good, to serve, to be useful to the neighbor from the Lord, for the sake of good and use, and not for any sake of self or the world, even as the Lord himself does good and performs uses to man, not for his own sake, but for the eternal welfare and happiness of man, whom the Divine Love would make happy from itself to eternity. This fact I notice as prominent in the career and life of Abraham Lincoln, as characterizing the man, to whom, for this reason, and for his earnest devotion to the principle it involves, future ages will do even more honor, than has been accorded to him in the present; as they themselves, shall open to the life of that principle, and grow into the fullness and perfection of the real manhood, which can alone flow from its activity and power, seeing that it is the very going forth of the Lord's life in the work of regenerating man into the image and after the likeness of the Divine.

And yet another thing, prominent in the disposition of our murdered President, do I notice; his tender and generous heart; his nature abounding in kindness and love to his fellow men. By this he won the affections of the people as thoroughly as he established himself in their confidence, by his entire earnestness and unswerving integrity of purpose, and by the singleness of aim with which he held on his way to the suppression of the rebellion, and the restoration of the Union. In this he was strong, and also—weak; and since it would, unquestionably, have been the means of hindering, if not of frustrating, the great object whereunto he had devoted all his powers, talents, energies and life, so did it become the means of ending his existence on earth, and of transferring it to a sphere where true patriotism is changed into a love of the Lord's heavenly kingdom. Had President Lincoln not yielded to his super-abundant kindness of disposition and entered the theatre on the night of the 14th of April, he would not have been the victim, and Booth would not have been the murderer. For, whatever his intentions, however wicked and devilish his purpose, the *actor* could not have slain the President in any other place but in that in which he was sustained, impelled and incited by the infernal spirits, by whom he was supplied with a motive, and upheld in his purpose.

And this leads me to speak of him, of the assassin.

How unlike his victim! Between them there was nothing in common, but the ordinary traits and appearance of humanity. In their uses, in their characters of heart and mind, in their origins, in their activity and in their lives, they were opposites. The one, as the Ruler of the nation, was a true representative man; the other, as an imitator and mimic of pretended and assumed characters, was a merely external and false representative, and

a failure even in this. Born, doubtless, with some hereditary love for the actor's art, he possessed neither the energy nor the talents to achieve success. Dissolute in his tastes and habits, he shunned a life of industry and labor, and sought to enrich himself by whatever easy methods came within his reach. A spurious Southerner, he had not even the excuse of birth and hereditary disposition, of education and family influence and association, for his rebellion against the government. A citizen of a border State, which had *not* seceded from the Union, he was false to the very principle, the principle of State Rights and State allegiance, for which the South professed to contend. And thus did he represent most fully in himself, the causelessness of the entire rebellion, as in his passions, and their manifestation, he represented the evils which moved to its outbreak, the evil lusts of dominion and of money, to be gratified at the expense of the lives, the possessions and labor of other men. He was an actor, for fame and for money; he assumed and pretended evil passions, as well as true and noble emotions and feelings, for fame and money; and when he failed in mimic tragedy, he rushed headlong into real tragedy, for fame—and for money.—To him belongs not even the infernal credit of having been animated by the unaffected evil lust which ruled so many in the rebellion. His act was mere acting, from an actor's love.

It was all a lie, as it was only a murder. He was not a man of the South by parentage, or by birth; he was not a slaveholder; he held not an inch of "sacred soil;" he had not even "expatriated" himself to become a rebel soldier. He lived under the government which he professed to hate, and, whilst enjoying its protection, he deliberately planned, and treacherously arranged all things for the deed of death; but so, that secure in its successful

accomplishment, he might also secure his escape, and reap and enjoy his reward. And, in all of it, though he did succeed in part of his purpose, I can see nothing more than the lowest cunning, without intelligence, without prudence, without common sense. What great result could he possibly have looked for? The war was at an end, the victory had been won, the rebellion was crushed. The death of the President could not restore the armies of the South, turn back the tide of triumph, or begin the war anew. Not even the desire of revenge, can be urged as a motive for his deed. There was to him no cause of revenge; most certainly not in connection with the man whom he slew, the very last of all men whose life should have been taken by one who sought the safety or immunity of his rebel friends. It was an act of sheer stupidity, of blind folly and madness; an act of wanton devilishness, at its heart an attempted and designed destruction of the Lord, in the person of his representative, to the end that the devil might rule and give him his well earned reward. And yet, in all this, does this man represent the South in its rebellion against a government of law and order, in its life of selfish pride, and sloth and uselessness; in its dependence upon the labor of others; in its hatred of the principle and love of use, of the principle and love of labor, which lay at the very core of the whole movement, which was the hell in its lusts, that moved them against the heaven which the Lord ever seeks to establish on earth, by means of the government of His truth, and of the acknowledgment of law as supreme, and by the promotion of every form of useful life, arising from the grand republican principles of the common good, and of devotion to the general welfare as the highest and purest civil charity towards the neighbor.

II. *Time and Place*—

It is certainly remarkable, and cannot be regarded otherwise than as most significant, that the assassination of President Lincoln, who, in his office, represented the Lord to this nation, should have taken place on the day set apart by the Church, or at least by a large portion of the Churches, for the purpose of commemorating the solemn event of the Crucifixion of the Assumed Humanity, after betrayal into the hands of His enemies by the traitor Judas; and, still further, that it should have been accomplished in a Theatre,—a place of public amusement.

Had this political Judas covenanted with the Rulers of *his* people, to betray him for a reward? We cannot doubt it. Most certain it is, that he strove hard to earn a righteous retribution, according to the eternal law of retaliation, which decrees that man shall ever receive as he gives. He slew, and he was slain. “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” A brutal murderer, he died the death of a brute. Of his hereafter, we are not allowed to judge, any more than we are allowed to judge of the eternal fate of the ancient traitor. This is in the hands of Him who alone knows and tries the hearts and reins of men; who alone can judge an eternally righteous judgment, concerning the future states of men. To that judgment do we freely deliver him.

But here is the fact in relation to the time, and what will we make of it? Certainly the day was representative of states and conditions in the Church, and in human life; and by virtue of this it must have had a connection with the influences operative upon the minds of men, and with the principles which governed and determined their actions. As in ancient days, when, during the Feast of the Passover, the Lord, in His Humanity, accomplished the divine work of Redemption, and Hell rose up in its final

effort, and put forth all its infernal might to prevent that accomplishment, so may it not have been, during this feast of Easter, which holds in the Christian Church the place of the Feast of the Jewish Passover, that the devilish agencies, so long at work to destroy the very principle, involved in our great struggle, the principle of the common good, as the soul and centre of all civil charity; the principle of use and a life of use, which the Lord had revealed and fulfilled in His Humanity on earth, and which He had given to the Church as the essence of its life and existence, exerted in one last, mighty endeavor all their power to effect its destruction by a murder? And may it not have been that the rage of hell was inflamed to an utterly blinding and stupefying madness, because of the more powerful influx of goodness and truth, in consequence of a turning of men's minds, at least in thought, to Him from whom they are, by the season and its worship, in which was commemorated his work of rendering divine Truth perpetually present, and divine Good perpetually acceptable to all those who will come unto Him?

Be this as it may, sure it is, that Satan found as ready and open a place in the heart of this modern, as in the heart of that ancient Judas, and aimed his blow as certainly at the life of the Lord's Representative head of this nation, as at the life of His Humanity itself, in which He had come into the world to serve and to save the human race. And sure it is, that, in neither case, did hell seek to destroy a mere outward and corporeal life, but that which it contained, that which it was and meant, the divine work of redemption in the one,—and the work of restoring to law, to the Truth in the civil plane, its right to supremacy, and to man the just and inalienable right to act in freedom according to reason, and to eat himself

the bread which he earned in the sweat of his face.— And sure it is, finally, that in neither case, was or could the design of hell be accomplished. God's word of Truth is eternal and cannot be destroyed. Against his will in that Word, the gates of Hell can never prevail. They nailed His Human body to the Cross, but the human race is redeemed. They took the natural life of President Lincoln, but the rebellion is crushed, and the Union restored. And so will it ever be, world without end, thanks, eternal thanks to His merciful ruling and overruling Providence.

But again, why, on this day, was the President found in a Theatre? There are times and seasons for all things. Had he thought of, or reflected on the fact that so many christians in the land held this to be a sacred season, to be devoted to special services of divine worship, even though he himself may have received other religious instruction; had his mind been led to dwell upon the great events, which were then commemorated, I feel convinced that even his strong desire not to disappoint the people, would have given way to other and higher considerations, and that his life would have been spared. But this was not to be. His superabundant natural kindness and good will had performed their great use. As oil upon the troubled waters, they had served to mitigate the horrors of the cruel and bitter strife, to restrain its fury, to soften its iron hardness, and to preserve the feelings of the men of the North from sinking into mere revenge. But now, when all this was overpast, when the Truth was needed, when the law had to be restored to its supreme right, when justice had to be vindicated and wrong-doing punished for the good and lasting peace of the nation, that same disposition could only have tended to hinder the course of justice, to fetter the hands of the government, and

to prevent, what he himself so ardently desired and prayed for, the achievement of a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations. And thus, it came through his own weakness, that this good and worthy man, this great man, was led to the place of slaughter;—humbly and meekly led, even as a loving father suffers himself to be drawn by the hands of his children to witness their play, and, by his presence to give them joy.

As I have said, it was only in a theatre, that the actor could have accomplished his deed of death.

III. *The Act.*

And what now do we say of the act? It was all and only a murder, clothed in the dark and filthy rags of a lie. As such, it is the last and lowest point of the abyss of the rebellion, into which it had poured every particle of its accumulated venom of rage, hatred, malice and revenge, and by which it struck not at the man, but at the government; not at Abraham Lincoln, but at the head and heart of the nation; not at the President, but at the Lord, whom he represented.

It matters not, what theories may be advanced in regard to the motives and thoughts of the chief actor in this tragedy. Certain, most certain it is, that if the rebellion had not been, if hell had not moved men to the rebellion, Booth would not have been the assassin of President Lincoln. It was the act of the rebellion, and not of this miserable wretch. He was but the hand nerved from Richmond, to do the work which Richmond had striven for four long years to accomplish, the work of destroying our free government, in order to establish on its ruins the worst of despotism.

If it is true, as we believe, that our country is a neighbor to us in the highest natural sense, then, is it true also, that this rebellion was but one enormous murder.

And if it is true, as we know it to be, that whatever cause of freedom and right was put forth to justify secession and war, was but a pretence assumed to cover the most selfish and wicked ends of dominion and avarice, then is it true also, that this rebellion clothed itself in a lie, whose rents and tatters only revealed more truly the hideous deformity and foulness of the body within.

And in this, its true character, did Booth, the voluntary representative, not fail the master who had sent him on his devilish mission. As the leaders of the South had deliberately planned, and treacherously, perfected their scheme of treason at the very seat of government, and whilst occupying its high places of power and emolument, so did he, at the same seat of government, whilst enjoying its protection, and living unmolested in the pursuit of his pleasures, secretly arrange, and traitorously perfect his scheme of murder. As they began their war of rebellion by a sudden and overwhelming assault upon an unprepared fortress, guarded by a mere handful of men, so did he steal upon his unsuspecting victim, and do the deed of death. Were Beauregard and his seven thousand less cowardly assassins than this man? Was his bullet sent on a more devilish errand than the first ball which they fired at Sumter? Were not these, in very deed and truth, but the first and last acts of the same foul murder? And, when the men of the South, after the fall of Fort Sumter, raised the cry of freedom, and proclaimed a war of independence of northern tyranny and oppression, was that other and less a lie than when the assassin, leaping upon the familiar stage, and brandishing a knife which had *not* done the deed, with actor's mouthing hoarsely cried, "*Sic semper tyrannis!*"

Abraham Lincoln, the murdered President; a tyrant!

That good, kind, tender-hearted man a tyrant! The

man who saved more traitors' lives from a merited doom than a hundred of his soldiers had slain in battle, and who would, doubtless, have been ready to pardon them all, a tyrant! Could malice have invented a greater falsehood?

And this poor wretch, when he uttered those words, before he passed out into the darkness and the night, which led to death; and the proud men of that arrogant old State which had inscribed them on its coat-of-arms, did he, did they ever think that their motto might be made a two-edged sword, cutting both ways? Did they reflect that the ancient words, "*thus ever to tyrants,*" need but a little word, but a letter, to be read "*thus ever by tyrants.*" Who is the tyrant? The slave-driver, who would wring his bread from the sweat of other men's faces; who would swing his cruel lash over the heads, and lay it on the bare backs of all his brethren, in order that he may be "let alone" to work out his selfish will in the gratification of his vile lusts; who would ruin all, that he alone might rule; or—that man of the people, who would go forth to do his duty to his country and his God, faithfully and fearlessly, because it is a duty, and for the good, and freedom and happiness of all, "with malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right," as God gave him to see the right?

Was not this last act a full and perfect representation of the whole rebellion in its moving causes, in its cherished means, and in its intended results; in its agent and in its last victim?

And now, in conclusion, what of the results; what may we anticipate of them in the future?

First and foremost, the nation lives, and the nation living, acknowledges a Divine Providence ruling and overruling all the affairs of men for a good, greater, higher and

better than the human mind can foresee, or human prudence provide for.

And the President lives. For the principle of royalty being holy and from the Lord, cannot be destroyed, the office of Ruler is perpetual. And in the man who now clothes that office, the nation has confidence; it acknowledges the right man in the right place. The man by birth, by life and experience, best fitted to accomplish the work which needs now to be done. He has spoken, and his proclamation meets the approval of all sincerely true and loyal men, and fills their hearts with a full trust and hope, that the rebellion will be effectually crushed out of all that remains of it so as never again to raise its head in the land.

Human slavery is abolished forever. The crime and the curse have wrought their fearful results, by permission of a merciful Providence; they have been burnt up in the fire of their own building, and out of their ashes there shall arise a new life, the life of the Freedmen, to add to the nation's prosperity and glory, and to bring the added weight of its influence to bear upon other lands and other nations, for the promotion of the good of the universal race of man. And when these once chattels, these once beaten and tortured, oppressed and degraded human being "without souls," shall have been admitted to the duties of citizenship, as they most surely will be, and in all justice should be, then will the great principle of the humanity of labor, of the divine humanity of labor, stand fully vindicated before the world. Then, too, will the church of the Lord find in this principle, as the grand basis of all human striving and activity, the real and true ground whereon to rest the spiritual and divine principle of use, and of a life of use, in the doing of good, in the serving of his neighbor by every man, whereby the divine

life, coming down more fully and perfectly to all, shall prepare a true, lasting and heavenly peace on earth, and go forth in angelic good will to all men.

And, as these results, slowly and gradually developing at first, shall go on ever more surely and rapidly towards their perfection, this nation, and all nations, will learn to know and to acknowledge the Lord himself, in His Divine, spiritual, moral and civil law, and coming to love them better, will obey them more gladly and faithfully, and do His will more fully in the earth, as it is done in the heavens.

And then, too, men and brethren, will their Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer be not only on one day out of many, but on all days. Grieved by any want or deficiency of truth and good, which hinders their life of duty and use, they will seek and strive to know rightly ever more of the divine will and law; they will humble themselves ever more truly and internally, before the Divine Ruler and King, and pray daily, pray always, pray with every affection and thought, for His continual presence in His Truth, for His continual guidance by His Truth, for His continual leading of their lives into all goodness, virtue, and holiness.

And then, finally, as men look back through the vista of the ages to this day, and read the history of this time, and ponder on its lessons, in the light of the Truth experienced and realized, they will say, of Abraham Lincoln:

“Surely this man, this foremost man of the nation in the darkest hour of its existence, whose last dying look beheld only the faintest opening dawn of the promised future, this man of the people, and of labor, lived not in vain, he died not in vain. He trusted, with humble and childish heart, in the mercy of the Lord, and the Lord, in mercy, hath granted his earnest and fervent prayer. There is peace on earth.”

“To His great name be honor, and glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 837 634 1 ●